



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY, MARCH 24, 2006
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CRM
(202) 514-2008
TDD (202) 514-1888

JORDANIAN MAN SENTENCED IN 1982 BOMBING OF PAN AM FLIGHT FROM TOKYO TO HONOLULU

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Mohammed Rashed, a.k.a. Rashid Mohammed, has been convicted and sentenced in connection with the 1982 bombing of a Pan Am flight which killed a Japanese teenager and resulted in the injury of several other passengers, Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division and U.S. Attorney Kenneth L. Wainstein of the District of Columbia announced today.

Rashed, who was born in Jordan, was sentenced at U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., today on conspiracy and murder charges contained in a 1987 indictment that also included two other alleged members of the now-defunct “15 May” terrorist group. Under the terms of a plea agreement with the U.S. government, which was unsealed upon sentencing today, Rashed will be released on March 20, 2013, after serving nearly 25 years in prison – including time served in a Greek prison. U.S. District Court Judge Royce C. Lamberth also imposed restitution of \$116,525 to be paid to the parents of the teenager killed in the bombing.

On Aug. 11, 1982, a bomb exploded aboard Pan Am Flight 830 traveling from Tokyo to Honolulu, killing a Japanese teenager and injuring several other passengers. The indictment returned by a federal grand jury in the District of Columbia in 1987 charged Rashed, Abu Ibrahim and Christine Pinter with being members of the “15 May” organization and responsible for the placement of bombs in a number of locations, including Pan Am Flight 830. The “15 May” terrorist group was formed in 1979 by Ibrahim, and its objective was to promote the Palestinian cause by killing Israeli and U.S. citizens, and by causing damage to Israeli and American interests around the world. The group is believed to be responsible for five separate bombing missions in the early 1980s.

Rashed was arrested in Greece in May 1988. The United States sought his extradition at the time in connection with the 1987 indictment, but the request was denied and Rashed was instead prosecuted by Greece under the Montreal Convention, an international treaty which governs the destruction of aircraft. Following two separate trials in Greece, Rashed was convicted of murdering the Japanese passenger killed on Pan Am Flight 830, and of placing an explosive aboard an aircraft. Rashed served eight years of a 15-year prison sentence in Greece and was released in December 1996. He then traveled to a foreign country. In June 1998, Rashed was arrested by the FBI on the U.S. charges and transported back to the United States. His two co-defendants, Ibrahim and Pinter, are still fugitives.

Rashed and his accomplices were given a safe haven in Iraq in the early 1980s by Saddam Hussein’s regime. They launched multiple bombing operations out of Baghdad throughout Europe and, in this case, on the American-owned passenger airplane bound for the United States.

Rashed pleaded guilty in the District of Columbia on Dec. 17, 2002, following a U.S. Appeals Court challenge that upheld the charges in the indictment. After his guilty plea, and as part of the plea agreement, Rashed began cooperating with the United States. The plea agreement required Rashed to cooperate in regard to any matter which relates directly or indirectly to any acts or potential acts of terrorism and violence that may have been committed or planned by himself or others, and to testify at trials if needed.

“The passage of time does not diminish our commitment to bringing terrorists to justice for their crimes,” said Assistant Attorney General Fisher. “As this case clearly demonstrates, we will pursue terrorism cases around the globe and work to achieve justice for the victims, however long it takes.”

United States Attorney Wainstein stated, “Today’s sentencing was a long time coming for the victims of this terrorist attack. This prosecution shows that we never call off the chase for terrorists and we never forget their victims.”

This case was prosecuted by the Counterterrorism Section of the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice and the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Columbia, and investigated by the FBI.

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